**SCIENTIFIC NAME**
*Galeus melastomus* Rafinesque, 1810

**DISTRIBUTION**
Eastern Atlantic from Norway to Senegal, including the Azores. Occurs in the Mediterranean Sea.¹ ²

**COMMON NAMES**
BLACKMOUTH CATSHARK, Blackmouth Dogfish, Blackmouth Angler, Mouse Catshark, Fleckhai (DEU), Pintarroja Bocanegra (ESP), Chien Espagnol (FRA), Boccanera (ITA), Spaanse Hondshaai (NLD), Leitão-boca-negra (PRT).

**IDENTIFICATION AND COLOUR**
1. Long, slender body.² ³
2. Long anal fin.² ³
3. Compressed precaudal tail.² ³
4. Inside of mouth black.² ³

► Brown dorsally with defined pattern of 15–18 large, dark saddle blotches and numerous smaller spots.² ³
► Ventrally white.² ³

**SIZE AND BIOLOGY**
► Matures: female 39–45cm; male 34–42cm.
► Max. TL: female 90cm; male 61cm.²
► Oviparous, up to 13 eggcases present in female oviduct at one time.² ³
► Feeds primarily on bottom invertebrates incl. shrimp and cephalopods, as well as teleosts and occasionally small elasmobranchs.¹ ⁴

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**IDENTIFY**

![Identification and colour diagram](image_url)

**SHO**
Global: LC  Europe: LC  Med: LC  Max. length: 90cm
**BLACKMOUTH CATSHARK**

**EGGCASE**

- 17–23 mm wide.\(^5\)
- 34–65 mm long.\(^5\)
- Small horns in each top corner; no tendrils.\(^5\)

**TEETH**

- Upper jaw: 42; sharp cusps with two cusplets.\(^3\)
- Lower jaw: 43; similar to upper jaw but with four cusplets.\(^3\)

**SIMILAR SPECIES**

- **Atlantic Sawtail Catshark** *Galeus atlanticus*
- **Mouse Catshark** *Galeus murinus*
- **Smallspotted Catshark** *Scyliorhinus canicula*
- **Nursehound** *Scyliorhinus stellaris*

**CONSERVATION STATUS***

- IUCN Red List: Global: Least Concern (2009)
- Europe: Least Concern (2015)
- Mediterranean: Least Concern (2016)

- Abundant species, with survey and landings data indicating stable populations. However, declines in traditional target species mean fishermen are landing greater quantities of ‘unrestricted’ species such as the Blackmouth Catshark.\(^1\)

**COMMERCIAL IMPORTANCE**

- A bycatch in various fisheries along the edge of the continental shelf and upper slope. Discard levels are variable, with some European fleets discarding this species and other fleets retaining it.\(^1,2,7\)
- Low commercial value however meat is used for human consumption and skin used for leather.\(^1\)

**MANAGEMENT***

- No species-specific management in the Northeast Atlantic.
- Subject to FNA regulations.

**REFERENCES**

1 Abella et al. 2015.
2 Ebert & Stehmann. 2013.
3 Ebert et al. 2013.
4 Costa et al. 2005.

**HABITAT**

- Demersal, offshore shark found mainly on outer continental shelf and upper slope but ranging from 55–2,000m, primarily 200–500m.\(^2,3\)
- Segregates by size; adults and juveniles found deeper than recruits.\(^6\)